

# SOCIO- ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMMUNAL CONFLICT ON COCOA FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD IN NIGERIA

Bolarinwa, K.K.<sup>a</sup>, Oyeyinka, R.A<sup>b</sup>, Ajayi, M. <sup>c</sup>, Fakoya, E.O<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a, b, c</sup> Department of Agricultural Administration

<sup>d</sup> Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development,  
University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria

<sup>a</sup> Corresponding author: bkolade17@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** Cocoa is an economic crop which contributes immensely to gross domestic product of the nation and increase socio-economic status of farmers. However communal conflicts management style, employed by cocoa farmers often lead to destruction of life and properties in Core Conflict Areas (CCA). Attempt has been made by Governmental and non-governmental agencies to provide relief packages for conflict victims with little or no efforts geared towards socio-economic impacts of conflicts on farmers' livelihood variables which necessitate this study. The conflict areas were stratified into CCA and Outside Conflict Areas (OCA) based on anecdotal account of conflict impact in the area. Farmers' village list was used as sampling frame work where 10% of the farmers were randomly selected, from CCA, 61 and OCA 69 to give a total of 130 farmers who participated in the research. Data were collected using interview schedule, direct observation and analyzed using frequency, percentage as well as t-test. Findings revealed that farmers in CCA and OCA are in the average age range of 40.5 and 42.6 respectively and 70% of them were educated. OCA recorded higher Cocoa Mean Production Level (HCMPL) of 828.4 tonnes per annual as opposed to lower HCMPL of 105.0 tonnes recorded in CCA because 76% of them were displaced from their farm. Cocoa production level between core and outside conflict areas level is statistically different at  $P < 0.05$ . Consequently

majority (70%) of the farmers in core conflict areas live below poverty line. Hence, conflict relief packages in form of economic empowerment of the conflict victims and conflict management training technique should be promoted so as to bring peace an "essential factor of productions" in CCA.

**Keywords:** Production level, annual income level, communal conflict impact, farmers and cocoa

## I. INTRODUCTION

Cocoa dictates the pace of economic activities in former western states; now Ogun, Oyo, Osun and Ondo States. These states belong to what is often referred to as cocoa belt, of Nigeria. According to (1) western states produce 95% of cocoa in Nigeria. The production involves 33,000 peasant farmers and 48,000 hectares of land. Until 1975 the record indicated that Nigeria was the world second largest producer of cocoa (2)

In 1972, Nigeria produced an estimated 241,000 tons of cocoa. The number declined to 202,000 tonnes in 1977/78 and 100,000 tons in 1986 (3). It was believed that low producer price, paid by Nigerian Cocoa Board was responsible for decline, hence its abolition in 1986. Its abolition led to a gradual increase in production of cocoa from 1986 – 1997. The estimated Nigeria output from 1980 – 1997 is described in Table 1.

Table 1: Out-put of Cocoa between 1980 – 1997

Year	Out-put '000 tonnes	Year	Out-put '000 tonnes	Year	Out-put '000 tonnes
1980	153	1986	148	1992	292
1981	174	1987	100	1993	306
1982	156	1988	253	1994	323
1983	140	1989	256	1995	203
1984	140	1990	244	1996	323
1985	160	1991	268	1997	325

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria (1998). Data derived from Federal Office of Statistics (FOS)

Trend of cocoa output in Oyo/Osun are indicated in the Table 2 below. (This was the period when Osun was part of Oyo State).

Table 2: Trend of Cocoa output in old Oyo and Osun State output

Year	Old Oyo State (Osun and Oyo combine)	Osun Output	Percentage of Osun State Output %
1978/79	51,680	31664.37	61.27
1979/80	67,433	40,959.80	60.08
1980/81	65,710	38,078.95	57.95
19981/82	57,757	36,028.81	62.38
1982/83	66,575	39,878.43	59.9
1983/84	65,930	40,059.07	60.76
1984/85	63,846	36,960.45	57.89
1985/86	65,526	39,617.07	60.46

**Source:** Nigeria Cocoa Board, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development 1986 annual reports

The above table indicates the percentage of Osun State production out of old Oyo State output. The contribution of cocoa to the national economy is so enormous. Indeed after petroleum, it is the second highest foreign exchange earner in Nigeria. However, incessant conflicts among tenant farmers and land owner most of the time serve as a hindrance to production. (4) once reported that these conflicts are due to internal boundary disputes, rival interest of nomads and sedentary farmers as well as agitation for improved prices for agricultural commodities and improved standard of living by groups of farmers or peasants in some local government's areas. Example of such conflicts includes series of clashes between Ife and Modakeke communities in Osun State between 1981 – 1996. Many communities in Osun State have reasons to fight and reconciled e.g Ifetedo and Olode Modakeke and Ipetumodu. However in violent conflict ridden areas, (Ife and Modakeke) the hostilities of 2000 – 2001 claimed several lives and properties worth millions of Naira were vandalized. The situation became worse when the conflict spread from destruction of farmers settlement to farms. In the two communities some cocoa trees were cut down, salt poured on the cocoa and kola nut stocks to prevent them from sprouting. Also corpses of the villages attacked during the crisis littered the surrounding villages, particularly those of Ife and Modakeke indigenes (5). In view of anecdotal account of the conflicts effect on farmers' socio- economic status in the conflict ridden areas and unavailability of empirical records to established the effect of the conflict that this research

on of socio- economic impact of communal conflict on cocoa farmers' socio-economic status was conducted. The study was guided by the following research specific objectives:

- describe the personal and socio-economic characteristics of farmers in core and outside conflict locations.
- determine farmers accessibility to their farms,
- assess the effects of the conflict on cocoa production level ,
- determine the poverty level of farmers.

## II. HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in cocoa production level between core and outside conflict areas

## III. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Based on conflict severity or anecdotal account of conflict, villages in the state were stratified into core and outside conflict areas. In core conflict area out of 54 villages 31 had core conflicts, while outside conflict areas has 63 villages (6). (6) revealed that 6,120 farmers were in core conflict villages while 10,352 farmers were in outside conflict area.

Random sampling technique was used to select 7 villages in core and outside conflict areas respectively. Also, Simple random sampling technique was used to select 10% of farmers from the stratum. Hence, 61, and 69, farmers were selected in core and outside conflict areas respectively. Data were collected using interview schedule and analyzed using frequency, percentage as well as t-test

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

##### Personal characteristics of Cocoa farmers

Entries in Table 3 show the personal characteristic of farmers across conflict strata. As shown in Table 3 mean age range for farmers were 40.5 and 42.7 in core and outside conflict areas respectively. The implication of these findings is that more than 80.0% of farmers across conflict strata are young and still in their productive years. These findings are in line with the finding of (7and8) where they found that fewer older farmers take farming as a vocation due to lack of strength to cope with farm drudgery. Concerning sex, greater than (60%) of the farmers are males across conflict strata. Investigation during field

survey revealed that female farmers are more interested in processing, trading and distribution of agricultural produce than tilling the land and rearing of animal in the state .This finding corroborated (9) who discovered that food processing and agricultural products distribution are main activities of women in Nigeria. More than (80%) of the farmers were married and have house hold size of 5-8 across the conflict strata. There are only 3 main occupations in the study areas, farming, trading and civil service. In core conflict areas as shown in Table 3, distribution of farmers by occupation indicates that agriculture provides the primary means of livelihood to 83.6% of farmers while 39.2% of the farmers combine farming with other enterprises.

Table 3: Personal Characteristic of Cocoa farmers in Core and Outside Conflict areas

\*Age mean= 40.5 and 42.7 for core and outside conflict areas respectively

Variables Description	Core conflict		Outside conflict		Total	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
<b>*Age</b>						
12-24	4	6.5	2	2.9	6	4.6
25-37	13	21.6	9	13.4	22	16.9
38- 42	12	19.6	27	39.1	39	30.0
43- 52	24	39.7	30	43.3	54	41.5
53- 65	5	8.1	1	1.45	6	4.6
> 65	3	4.5	-	-	3	2.4
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	51	83.6	60	87.0	111	85.3
Female	10	16.4	4	13.0	19	14.7
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Single	2	3.3	4	5.8	6	4.6
Married	56	92.0	57	82.6	113	86.9
Divorce	-	-	2	2.9	2	2.9
Widow	3	6.0	6	8.7	9	5.6
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100
<b>Household</b>						
Small 1-5	18	29.5	28	41.0	46	35.4
Medium 5-8	41	67.2	41	59.0	82	63.1
Large 8- 13	2	3.3	-	-	2	2.5
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100

### **Social-economic characteristics of Cocoa Farmers**

Table 4 shows that majority (70%) of the farmers had one formal education or the other across conflict strata. The implication of this finding is that many of the farmers across conflict strata were educated and would be able to adopt new agricultural technologies and have access to credit facilities, which will lead to improvement in farmers' livelihood. This finding substantiated the assertion of (10) that broad mindedness can be determined by the level; of education which is very important in farmers' acceptance of new technologies that will increase agricultural production. Table 4 shows that 67.2% of farmers in core conflict area and 46.5% of farmers in outside conflict area belonged to social group. The finding across conflict strata revealed that farmers belonged to one social groups or the other. (11) assured that group participation is a framework by which peasant farmers defend and negotiate their interest; is an essential ingredient for achieving success in agricultural development projects. Table 4 revealed that all the farmers 100.0% had the opportunity to travel outside their villages across conflict strata.

Entries in Table 4 revealed that in 29.5% of the farmers inherited their pieces of land while 70.5% of the farmers' acquired land through any of the following: least, purchase and gift in core conflict area. The implication of this finding is that the most common land sources to farmers in core conflict area are least, purchase and gift. Therefore, land allocation to farmers if not handled positively may generate violent conflict that may adversely affect farmers socio-economic status. Table 4 indicates that in core conflict area 57.4% of farmers had 1-5ha farmland. The implication of this finding is that farmers' farm holdings are still small. This justifies the reason for combination of farming with other work in order to sustain their livelihood. This finding is in line with the submission of (12) that small scale farming largely dominates the agricultural sector in Nigeria.

### **Farmers' accessibility to their farm when violent conflict de-escalated**

Table 5 indicates that a very low percentage 24.0% of farmers in core conflict area had access to their farms when conflict de-escalated compared to 96.5% of the farmers in outside conflict area that had access to their farms. The implication of this finding is that in core conflict area 76.0% of farmers were displaced from their farm. It could be inferred from the result

that core conflict area landowners were hostile to tenant farmers because majority (76.0%) of them was prevented from entering their farms.

### **Cocoa Farmers Production Level after the Conflict**

Table 6 revealed differences in farmers' crops yield level between farmers across conflict strata. Higher mean index of 828.4 tonnes per annual that was recorded in the outside conflict zone for cocoa confirms the impact of the violent conflict on crop production in core conflict zone where lower mean index of 105.0 tonnes per annual was recorded for cocoa, other crops production level follow the same trends. Cocoa farmers in core conflict area felt the impact of the conflict because majority (76%) of the farmers were displaced and lost greater proportion of their work to conflict. This finding is supported by (13) who reported that the Osun state violent conflict reduced cocoa production in Ife –Modakeke (core conflict area). This community is regarded as the cocoa belt region of Osun state. Hence, farmers' socio-economic status in this location was adversely affected.

### **Distributions of respondents by head count poverty level after the conflict**

Head count poverty ratio, is simply an estimate of the percentage of people below the poverty line (14) which is a function of socio-economic status of farmers. Socio-economic status (SES) is the position that individual or family occupies with reference to the prevailing average standards of cultural possessions effective income, material possession and participation in the group activities of the community (15 and 10). The computed farmers head count poverty index as shown in Table 7 indicates that 70.0% of the farmers in core conflict area live below poverty line. That is they are poor. Meanwhile, fewer (40.0%) of the farmers were in the same category in outside conflict area. The higher proportion (70.0%) of the farmers in core conflict area that are in poor category confirm, the significance of the violent conflict which accounted for greater number (70.0%) of farmers in poor head count category in the core conflict area.

This finding confirms the observation of (16) that the strongest predictor of conflict impact among rural dwellers is poverty, since poverty and over dependence on subsistence agriculture is closely related. Farmers in the conflict spots of this study cannot be excluded from such outcomes.

Table 4: Socio-Economic Characteristic of Cocoa Farmers

Variables Description	Core conflict		Outside conflict		Total	
	Freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
<b>Education</b>						
None	6	9.8	4	5.8	10	8.0
Adult Literacy	16	27.9	19	27.5	35	27.0
Primary	20	32.2	15	21.7	35	27
Senior Secondary School	10	16.4	12	17.4	22	17.0
Tertiary	9	13.7	19	27.7	28	21.0
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100
<b>Member of Social Groups</b>						
Yes	40	67.2	24	34.8	64	49.2
No	21	32.8	45	65.2	66	50.8
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100
<b>Cosmopolitness</b>						
7-10 times	36	59.0	38	55.1	74	57.0
11-20	13	23.0	10	14.5	23	18.0
21-30	-	-	5	7.2	5	4.0
31-40	10	14.8	11	2.9	21	16.0
41-50	2	3.3	5	8.7	7	5.0
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100
<b>Sources of Land</b>						
Inheritance	18	29.5	31	45	49	38.0
Lease	19	31.1	8	11.6	27	21.0
Purchase	16	26.6	10	14.5	26	20.0
Gift	8	12.8	20	29	28	21.0
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100
<b>Agricultural Holdings</b>						
1-5 hectares	35	57.7	18	26.1	53	41.1
6-10	11	18.0	14	20.3	25	19.2
11-15	11	18.0	7	10.1	17	13.1
16-20	7	11.5	13	20.3	20	15.3
21-25	-	-	15	23.2	15	11.4
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100

Table 5: Farmers accessibility to their farm

Variables Description	Category	Core conflict		Outside conflict		Total	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
	Yes	15	24.0	68	98.5	83	63.8
	No	46	76.0	1	1.5	47	36.2
Total		61	100	69	100	130	100

Table 6: Cocoa Farmers Crops Production Level

Crops	Violent Conflict area	Outside Conflict area
	Crops Mean Weight (tones)	Crops Mean Weight (tones)
Cocoa	105.1	828.4
Kolanut	93.7	251.4
Maize	614.4	885.2
Yam	250.0	771.6
Cassava	450.0	1721.3

Table 7: Cocoa Farmers Poverty Head Count

Variables	Violent		Outside		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Core	31	50.0	12	18.0	43	33.1
Moderately poor	12	20.0	15	22.0	27	20.7
Non-poor	18	30.0	42	60.0	60	46.2
Total	61	100	69	100	130	100

Table 8 shows that there is a significant difference in farmers' production level of the selected crops across Osun State's core and outside conflict areas. For instance, the calculated t- test is statistically significant for cocoa ( $t = 3.37$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This implies that the cocoa production mean scores in core and

outside conflict areas were not equal after the violent conflict. Therefore, cocoa rehabilitation programme would be necessary to re-establish burnt farms, establishment of new or fresh farms and provision of short duration maturing and high yielding varieties of cacao in the area.

T-test Analysis of Cocoa farmers' Production Level between Core and Outside Conflict areas:

Variables	Crops	Means	t-cal	P-Value	Decision
Core Conflict	Cocoa	105.0	3.37	0.05	s
Outside Conflict		828.4			

S= Significant at  $P < 0.05$

D.f. = degree of freedom

## V. CONCLUSION

In the light of the results of the study the following major conclusions were drawn. Farmers in the core conflict areas employed negative conflict handling style consequently the conflict not only destroyed their cocoa production it makes core conflict area a poverty endemic area. In order to alleviate poverty which is an indicator of low socio- economic status and prevent occurrence of violent conflict in the area the following recommendation were made:

- a. formation of farmers into conflict mediation consultative committee should be encouraged in core conflict area. Such a committee will be in a vantage position to feel the pulse of the people and prevent emergence of conflict situations in the area before it escalates further to any damaging level.
- b. Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank and Commercial Banks should be encouraged to give agricultural loans at low interest rates to genuine farmers in Osun state in order to improve farming and farmers' socio-economic status.
- c. capacity building for farmers should be encouraged through formation of rural cooperative societies or related associations to facilitate farmers access to loan facilities with less burden for collateral security requirements.

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